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Integration of Science & Management

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Note: This PowerPoint summarizes the ideas of BLM and non-BLM stakeholders as discussed during the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System Summit, November 15-18, 2010. This PowerPoint represents neither the consensus opinions of the group attending the session nor the official positions of the BLM.

Introduction to Science & Integration Focus Group

- This group focused on ideas for the NLCS to more systematically support the delivery and integration of science into our basic work processes

Summary of Discussions

- Systematic integration of science into BLM management could be streamlined
- NLCS can play an important role in testing ways for improving science-management integration

Summary of Discussions

- The NLCS can serve as a model to better apply science in decision making
- The group focused on major topical areas
- Addressed specific comments from focus groups

Themes

- The BLM works better at the project scale than the landscape scale
- The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System can help in the transition to a landscape approach
- Lack of synthesis and dissemination of results and other science products resulting from research on the ground

Themes

- Poorly developed relationships with research institutions vs. other agencies
- Need to develop ways to incorporate ethnographic and traditional knowledge
- Need to better incorporate partners and ensure more collaborative participation

Priority Topics/Key Ideas

- Define the role of the NLCS in the landscape management context
- Develop a science strategy implementation plan for the NLCS as well as unit science strategies
- Develop process and policy
- Promote partnerships and citizen science
- Develop business practices

Defining the Role of the NLCS in Landscape Management

- Key Roles for the NLCS:
  - Core areas
  - Habitat connectivity
  - Control areas
  - Piloting management
  - Research for landscape change

Defining the Role of the NLCS in Landscape Management

- Products:
  - Concept paper
  - Future guidance
  - Vision document
- Audience
  - Executive Leadership Team
  - BLM Internal

Task I: Develop a White Paper Defining the Role of the NLCS in Landscape Management

- Process:
  - Core team from all levels of the BLM
  - Core team will review products
  - Establish SharePoint site
  - List of all national initiatives (Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, etc.)
  - Identify key external entities and define mechanism for their participation

Role of the NLCS in Landscape Management

- Sideboards:
  - Resource values
  - Link to NLCS science strategy
  - Connection to other BLM activities
  - Link to other conservation lands (e.g. Area of Critical Environmental Concern)

Task II: Develop a Science Strategy Implementation Plan for the NLCS and Unit Science Plans

- Process:
  - Review strategy – overall action plans for NLCS
  - Review science plan template
  - Develop national priorities
  - Develop national questions
  - Step down

Develop a Science Strategy Implementation Plan for the NLCS and Unit Science Plans

- Product:
  - Science Plan Strategy Implementation
    - Examples of diversity of science
    - Case studies/applications
    - Science needs USGS typology
    - Tie back to decision making
    - Address monitoring
    - Articulate how NLCS units are unique
    - Develop NLCS priorities (e.g. monitoring, inventory)
    - Identify what transcends multiple units
    - Develop explicit strategy to incorporate adaptive management
    - Management as experimentation
    - Focus on which objects/values can be effectively monitored

Develop a Science Strategy Implementation Plan for the NLCS and Unit Science Plans

- Parties:
  - US Geological Survey
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service
  - Agricultural Research Service
  - Management partners (National Park Service, Forest Service)
  - Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units to work with stakeholders (conduct outreach)
- Timeframes:
  - 4 Months
  - Unit science plan template review
  - Use task #I above

Develop a Science Strategy Implementation Plan for the NLCS and Unit Science Plans

- Sideboards:
  - Tie into the BLM budget system (recognize disparate funding process)
  - Find out what codes are actually funding science
  - Develop program priorities for science
  - Public land statistics (what do we want to report in regard to the NLCS?)
  - Review of other relevant information
  - See white paper: "Role of the NLCS in Landscape Management"

Task III: Partnerships and Citizen Science

- Develop guidance on citizen science
  - Examples and case studies
  - Incorporation of indigenous and traditional knowledge
  - Identify current and potential partners
  - Memorandum of understanding with USGS
  - Portal for science clearinghouse in NLCS
  - Science advisory boards (e.g. monument or NCA advisory council, resource advisory council, advisory body) to formally or informally incorporate external perspectives

Task IV: Identify BLM Business Practices for Landscape Level Projects

- Use the NLCS to pilot the development of projects that can incorporate science more systematically throughout the planning process and that are driven from a landscape perspective
  - How to develop a conceptual model
  - How to incorporate this model into planning/NEPA
  - Conceptual ideas included developing a NEPA document that addresses a landscape vs. a project specific orientation
  - Preplanning for NEPA projects that integrates science as the core driver